

REMARKS

This Amendment, submitted in response to the Office Action dated January 27, 2005, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-27 are now all the claims pending in the application.

I. Preliminary Matter

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner approve the drawings filed November 14, 2003, by indicating acceptance of the drawings in the next Office Action.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Teshima (U.S. Patent No. 6,272,470) in view of Sato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,911,687).

Claim 1

Claim 1 recites “the client terminals having an ability of transmission and reception of sets of medical image data together with accompanying information regarding the sets of medical image data via a network.” For purposes of clarifying the prosecution history, Applicant requests that the Examiner clarify whether Teshima or Sato is being cited for teaching this aspect of the claim. On page 3 of the Office Action it appears that Sato is being cited for teaching this aspect of the claim, whereas on page 12 of the Office Action, it appears that Teshima is being cited for teaching this aspect of the claim.

Further, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner identify with particularity, what is being cited for teaching medical image data, accompanying information, and a search condition, as recited in claim 1. To the best of Applicant's understanding of the Examiner's rejection, Applicant submits the following in traversal of the rejection.

Claim 1 further recites "searching for a desired one of the sets of medical image data stored therein by using the accompanying information, and transmitting the set of medical image data." The Examiner asserts that Sato col. 13, lines 45-53 and col. 14, lines 1-5 teaches this aspect of the claim. The respective column and lines cited by the Examiner discloses that image data of the patient is transferred to the integrated management server from the image file and to the management center via the wide area network. The management center preserves the image data sent from the treatment station in the record file for the patient in local area together with the case record of the patient. However, there is no indication of *searching* for medical image data by using the *accompanying information* of the image data.

Moreover, in Sato, a doctor retrieves patient data by downloading the case record data of a particular patient. Therefore, a search is performed according to the patient to be examined. The record file for the patient is then displayed on the clinic terminal. See Sato col. 14, lines 16-20. However, there is no teaching or suggestion of *searching* for medical image data by using the *accompanying information* of the image data.

Claim 1 further recites

"...when a desired search condition is inputted from any one of the client terminals and is transmitted to the

image database server, the image database server searches for the **accompanying information** using the desired search condition received by the image database server, if the accompanying information is successfully found, then retrieves the **medical image data** regarding the accompanying information, and transmits the retrieved medical image data to the relevant client terminal."

The Examiner concedes that Sato does not disclose that the medical data of the patient is accompanied with information regarding the set of medical data and cites Teshima to cure the deficiency. The Examiner reasons that Teshima discloses a system that stores patient image information on a patient card and link information is produced with the image data upon writing the data image information in the database server. The data image information can then be accessed externally using the link information.

Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, there is no indication that image data is stored on a patient card. In particular, image data is too large to be stored on a patient card and is therefore stored externally. Access to the image data is obtained via a link. See Teshima col. 4, lines 48-55.

Moreover, the Examiner asserts that the request for patient information as disclosed in Sato, discloses inputting a desired search condition. However, upon inputting a patient name, the entire patient record is displayed for the doctor and not merely particular image data

Further, the image data of Teshima is obtained via a link and not by a search according to patient to be examined (search condition as cited by the Examiner). In Teshima, when a link to

an image is selected, the image is directly provided to the user. A search for accompanying information is not performed.

For at least the above reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims should be deemed allowable. To the extent claims 15 and 16 recite similar elements, they should be deemed allowable for at least the same reasons.

Claim 21

Claim 21 recites that the “accompanying information is directly attached to said image data.” The Examiner asserts that in Teshima, patient image information is stored in a patient card and link information is produced with the image data upon writing the data image information to the database server and the data image information can be accessed externally using the link information. However, as indicated by the Examiner, access to the external image data is obtained via a link. Upon selecting a link, which is on a patient card, a user will be directed to the desired image data. The image data is stored externally and is not *directly attached* to the link information.

For at least the above reasons, claim 21 should be deemed allowable.

III. New claim

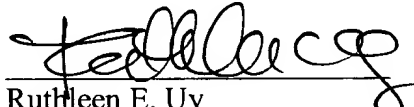
Applicant has added claim 27 to provide a more varied scope of protection. Claim 27 should be deemed allowable by virtue of its dependency to claim 1 for the reasons set forth above.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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